appreciate that some conventional aspects of the pixel processing system have been

simplified or omitted for clarity. Those skilled in the art will appreciate that the

features described above could be combined in various ways to form multiple

variations of the invention. Those skilled in the art will also appreciate variations of

5   the pixel processing system that fall within the scope of the invention. As a result,

the invention is not limited to the specific example described above, but only by the

following claims and their equivalents.

What is claimed is:

1. A method of operating a pixel processing system, the method comprising:

receiving a target pixel value and neighbor pixel values;

determining a minimum value and a maximum value among the neighbor pixel values;

5   if the target pixel value is less than the minimum value, then increasing the target pixel value; and

if the target pixel value is greater than the maximum value, then reducing the target pixel value.

10   2. The method of claim 1 further comprising:

in response to increasing the target pixel value, reducing the neighbor pixel values to maintain an average value; and

in response to reducing the target pixel value, increasing the neighbor pixel values to maintain the average value.

15   3. The method of claim 2 wherein the neighbor pixel values correspond to eight neighbor pixels that surround a target pixel corresponding to the target pixel value.

4. The method of claim 2 wherein:

increasing the target pixel value comprises increasing the target pixel value to

the minimum value; and

reducing the target pixel value comprises reducing the target pixel value to the

5   maximum value.

5. The method of claim 2 wherein:

increasing the target pixel value comprises increasing the target pixel value

half-way toward the minimum value; and

10   reducing the target pixel value comprises reducing the target pixel value

halfway toward the maximum value.

6. The method of claim 2 wherein:

reducing the neighbor pixel values comprises reducing the neighbor pixel

15   values corresponding to only two neighbor pixels horizontally aligned with a target

pixel corresponding to the target pixel value; and

increasing the neighbor pixel values comprises increasing the neighbor pixel

values corresponding to only the two neighbor pixels horizontally aligned with the

target pixel.

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7. The method of claim 2 wherein the pixel processing system comprises one of a

printer and a copier.

8. A pixel processing system comprising:

pixel evaluation circuitry configured to receive a target pixel value and neighbor pixel values and determine a minimum value and a maximum value among the neighbor pixel values; and

5   pixel adjustment circuitry configured to increase the target pixel value if the target pixel value is less than the minimum value and reduce the target pixel value if the target pixel value is greater than the maximum value.

9. The pixel processing system of claim 8 wherein the pixel adjustment circuitry is

10   configured to reduce the neighbor pixel values to maintain an average value in response to increasing the target pixel value and increase the neighbor pixel values to maintain the average value in response to reducing the target pixel value.

10. The pixel processing system of claim 9 wherein the neighbor pixel values

15   correspond to eight neighbor pixels that surround a target pixel corresponding to the target pixel value.

11. The pixel processing system of claim 9 wherein the pixel adjustment circuitry is configured to increase the target pixel value to the minimum value and reduce the

20   target pixel value to the maximum value.

12. The pixel processing system of claim 9 wherein the pixel adjustment circuitry is configured to increase the target pixel value half-way toward the minimum value and reduce the target pixel value halfway toward the maximum value.

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13. The pixel processing system of claim 9 wherein the pixel adjustment circuitry is configured to reduce the neighbor pixel values corresponding to only two neighbor pixels horizontally aligned with a target pixel corresponding to the target pixel value and increase the neighbor pixel values corresponding to only the two neighbor pixels horizontally aligned with the target pixel.

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14. The pixel processing system of claim 9 wherein the pixel processing system comprises one of a printer and a copier.

15. A product for pixel processing comprising:

pixel processing control instructions configured to direct a processor to receive a target pixel value and neighbor pixel values, determine a minimum value and a maximum value among the neighbor pixel values, increase the target pixel

5   value if the target pixel value is less than the minimum value, and reduce the target pixel value if the target pixel value is greater than the maximum value; and

storage media that is processor-readable and that stores the pixel processing control instructions.

10   16. The product of claim 15 wherein the pixel processing control instructions are configured to direct the processor to reduce the neighbor pixel values to maintain an average value in response to increasing the target pixel value, and increase the neighbor pixel values to maintain the average value in response to reducing the target pixel value.

15   17. The product of claim 16 wherein the neighbor pixel values correspond to eight neighbor pixels that surround a target pixel corresponding to the target pixel value.

18. The product of claim 16 wherein the pixel processing control instructions are

20   configured to direct the processor to increase the target pixel value to the minimum value and reduce the target pixel value to the maximum value.

19. The product of claim 16 wherein the pixel processing control instructions are configured to direct the processor to increase the target pixel value half-way toward the minimum value and reduce the target pixel value halfway toward the maximum value.

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20. The product of claim 16 wherein the pixel processing control instructions are configured to direct the processor to reduce the neighbor pixel values corresponding to only two neighbor pixels horizontally aligned with a target pixel corresponding to the target pixel value and increase the neighbor pixel values corresponding to only

10 the two neighbor pixels horizontally aligned with the target pixel.